

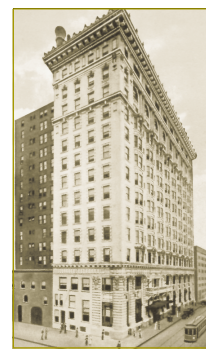
Lafayette Square District and Business District

HISTORY The area in this tour starts at Lee Circle, where the Lower Garden District or Coliseum Square area meets the Lafayette Square District. It extends through the Lafayette Square District to Poydras Street and then through the Historic Office Core of the Central Business District to Canal Street.

The Lafayette Square District is New Orleans second oldest residential neighborhood with many row houses dating to the early 1830's. It is made up predominantly of the upper part of Faubourg St. Marie (1788) and a small part of the lower portion of Faubourg Duplantier (1807). It was the residential section of the old Second Municipality, an area dominated by a then recent influx of "Americans" at a time when a culturally fractured New Orleans was divided into three separate cities, or municipalities, with three city councils, but only one mayor.

The Historic Office Core is the oldest part of the twentieth-century business district with many older skyscrapers including bank buildings and early corporate headquarters. In addition to some late twentieth-century skyscrapers, it also has a large collection of nineteenth-century buildings throughout, which gives it a very eclectic feeling. It is comprised of the lower part of Faubourg St. Marie and the original City Commons that was adjacent to the Vieux Carre.

Both these areas first appear on Carlos Trudeau's 1788 subdivision map of the Gravier Plantation, previously known as Bienville's Plantation.



Hotel Gruenwald, 1911

1. JERUSALEM TEMPLE 1137 St. Charles Ave.

Constructed in 1917 from plans by architects Emile Weil and Sam Stone, Jr., this Shriners Temple featured a triple ballroom, a half arena with a proscenium, and middle-eastern oriental detailing. The Mexican Band played in 1920 for the Armistice Celebration followed by a succession of balls, reviews, and parties under the long-time management of trumpeter Mike Caplan. It was a mecca for music for three quarters of a century.

2. BIENVILLE HOTEL ROOF 1040 St. Charles Ave.

Built in 1920-22 by the Gruenwald family and designed by Toledano, Wogan, & Bernard, this hotel featured a popular roof garden. Monk Hazel's Bienville Roof Orchestra was the house band in the late 1920's. Bandleader and cornetist Hazel hired Sharkey Bonano as cornetist for the famous recordings. The roof garden is still visible.

3. WTPS RADIO STUDIO 615 Howard Ave.

(now Andrew Higgins Blvd.) This Richardsonian Romanesque building was constructed in 1888. Built as the Howard Library, during the 1940's and 50's it was home to WTPS, the broadcast arm of the Times-Picayune and States newspapers. Their "Music of New Orleans" program was sometimes recorded, an example being the George Lewis Jazz Band circa 1949.

4. DRUIDS HOME 843 Camp St.

Built in 1916, this was the headquarters for the local grove of Druids, part of the United Ancient Order of Druids. The Barocco brothers, Dominick and Joe, who played in Jack Laine's bands, were among the many who played here. The Druids, who had their own carnival parade following Rex, stopped parading in the early 1930's, and disbanded several years later.

5. NAVAL BRIGADE HALL/GRUNEWALD'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC 827 Camp St.

This building, designed by architect/builder Julius Koch, was Naval Brigade Hall from 1903 until the 1940's. The Naval Brigade Band was directed by New Orleans ragtime composer, violinist, and bandleader William Braun. After World War II, Gruenwald Music Co. opened their School of Music with black and white students under the G. I. Bill program. Instructors included Otto Finck, Willie Humphrey, and Frank Federico. The School moved when it became part of Educational Gateways Music School business.

tour map

